

the presbyterian on the episcopal system. The essential elements of the presbyterian Church polity—the co-operation of the presbyter and even of the laity in Church government, in the ordination and election of ministers, in ecclesiastical legislation—are all found in the petition. As far as the predominant party in the Commons were concerned, England might have been virtually presbyterian in the middle of Elizabeth's reign.

The Puritan demand even for far-reaching ecclesiastical reform was, therefore, no mere will-o'-the-wisp of Calvinist zeal. The Puritan programme was certainly adopted by one branch of the legislature during this memorable session, and the Puritans had many sympathisers and supporters among the Commons throughout the parliamentary sessions of Elizabeth's reign. Still it is not easy to conceive of a presbyterian England, with an Elizabeth on the throne and a well-equipped hierarchy as the subservient instrument of her imperious will. Antagonism between the queen and her Puritan subjects was inevitable. For Elizabeth the Reformation had gone far enough—further, in truth, than was agreeable to her personal likings. For the Puritans it had lagged behind in popish or semi-popish bondage, and must be carried up to the level of the system of Geneva, in government and worship as well as in doctrine. They would have been content to recognise the royal supremacy in a modified form. The English presbyterians, indeed, taught strenuously that the civil power must protect and maintain the rights of the Church as they conceived it. But they claimed a larger measure of spiritual independence than Elizabeth could possibly allow, and their championship of the popular element in Church government was, in her eyes, merely the thin end of the wedge to civil disorder and rebellion. As to the Brownists, who plainly denied the right of the civil power to interfere in things religious, they were pure anarchists, for whom hanging was too good. It was a fixed idea with Elizabeth that Calvinism, which was sufficiently obnoxious on account of its rigidity, its baldness, its obstinacy, was a disloyal religion in any shape or form. It was a mistaken idea, for Calvinism, as we have seen, exalted, nay exaggerated, the civil authority. But Calvinists were not as a rule courtiers, and were not the